

This query arises as a result of misapprehending the nature of Samsara, perceiving it to be an objectively existent phenomenon that is experienced by everyone in the same way. However, since Samsara lacks intrinsic existence it is experienced differently by sentient beings depending on their past actions.

Shantideva says in his ***Engaging in Bodhisattva Deeds (Bodhisattvacharyāvatāra)***:

Since non-virtue is eliminated, there is no suffering.

Through knowledge, there is no lack of joy.

Misconceptions and non-virtue

Harm the mind and body

Through merit the body is blissful;

Through knowledge the mind is too.

Through remaining in Samsara for others' welfare,

Why should the compassionate ones be disheartened?

Also

Thus, after riding the horse of the mind of enlightenment,

Which dispels all dejection and fatigue,

You proceed from joy to joy.

What sensible person would become discouraged?

Bodhisattvas are driven by great compassion and the aspiration to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings; they are controlled by cherishing others and not by cherishing themselves. Hence, their actions of body, speech, and mind are largely virtuous, resulting in feelings of peace and joy that by far exceed the feelings of ordinary beings.

Even when Bodhisattvas experience the results of previously accumulated negative karma, it does not disturb their peace of mind, for they only care about others' suffering and not their own.

Due to their knowledge of the lack of inherent and true existence of Samsara and other phenomena, they are free from ordinary mental projections, frustrations, and worries. For them Samsara is like a magical illusion, devoid of any kind of independent and solid existence. Therefore, experiencing great physical and mental joy and bliss, they do not get disheartened.

At the time when Shantideva composed his text the most efficient mode of transportation was the horse. Therefore, just as a horse takes its rider swiftly and smoothly to his goal, likewise the powerful mind of Bodhicitta takes the practitioner swiftly and smoothly to enlightenment.

Furthermore, since Bodhisattvas' good qualities increase as they proceed on the path, their bliss and happiness increase, serving as an effective antidote to fatigue and discouragement.

Nagarjuna says in his ***Precious Garland (Ratnavali)***:

When suffering, even a short time is hard to bear;

What need to mention a time that is long?

But when free of suffering, and joyful,

What harms you over endless time?

Bodhisattvas have no physical suffering;

How could they have mental suffering?

Out of compassion they feel distress for the world;

Thus they remain for a long time.

So do not be discouraged,

Thinking, "Buddhahood is far away."

Always strive at these collections

So as to eliminate faults and gain good qualities.

In general, when suffering lasts only a short time it is hard to bear, much less when it lasts a long time. However, we are not troubled by happiness lasting long; in fact, we would like it to last even longer.

Therefore, we do not need to be disheartened by the length of the path because for Bodhisattvas who are basically free from physical and mental sufferings engaging in practice is, despite its hardships, a thoroughly enjoyable endeavor.

The only reason Bodhisattvas want to attain enlightenment quickly is because they want to be of the greatest benefit to sentient beings as soon as possible.

Nagarjuna says in his **Precious Garland (Ratnavali)**:

*Just as in all directions
Space, earth, water, fire and wind
Are limitless, so, we assert,
Suffering beings are without limit.*

*With compassion the Bodhisattvas
Extricate these limitless beings
From suffering and then determine
To set them in Buddhahood.*

*Those remaining steadfast in this way
Properly make this commitment,
And then, whether asleep or awake,
And even when careless,*

*They constantly accumulate merit as limitless
As living beings, for beings are without limit.
Because of the limitlessness of this, know
That limitless Buddhahood is not hard to gain.*

*Those who remain for an immeasurable time
Seek immeasurable enlightenment
For the sake of immeasurable beings
And accomplish immeasurable virtue.*

*Hence, though enlightenment is measureless,
How could they fail to attain it
Before long through a combination
Of these four immeasurable ways?*

There are four immeasurable phenomena: Immeasurable time, sentient beings, highest realizations of the goal, and wholesome actions.

As practitioners we should motivate ourselves with the aspiration to attain the immeasurable realizations of Buddhahood for the benefit of limitless sentient beings. After that, we need to focus on remaining in Samsara for an immeasurable period of time and take the Bodhisattva vows, thinking, "May I compile immeasurable merit and wisdom." Then, as long as we keep the vows, whether our mind is distracted by other things or not, whether we are asleep or awake we will constantly accumulate as much merit and purify as much negative karma as there are sentient beings.

The **Garland of Birth Stories (Jātakamālā)** says:

*Discouragement does not help to free from misery,
So, rather than torment yourself in sorrow,
Develop stable proficiency in the required goals.
Then even the very difficult becomes easy, bringing liberation.*

*So achieve what must be done by the indicated method.
Without making yourself fearful and unhappy.
Support yourself with stability that has the brilliance of proficiency,
Then, the achievement of all aims is in your hand.*

Usually the motivating force responsible for wanting to attain enlightenment as quickly as possible is our self-centered attitude.

